



KABC-TV LOS ANGELES, CA

Save Money / Consumer News

Six Southland homeowners win green energy makeover

Thursday, May 05, 2011



TAGS: environment, save money / consumer news, ric romero

Comment Now Email Print Report a typo



Ric Romero

More: [Bio](#), [E-mail](#), [Facebook](#), [Home Page](#), [News Team](#)

LOS ANGELES (KABC) -- On Thursday, six southland homeowners won an energy makeover for their homes worth thousands of dollars.

Albert Gerardo won \$50,000 and five other homeowners won \$10,000 each to do an energy makeover of their homes. It was all part of a contest organized by Energy Upgrade California in Los Angeles County, and Gerardo was more than happy to win.

"I work in sanitation," said Gerardo. "So I see a lot of the waste, and people don't recycle. So I am a big advocate of that because I see it every day. I see it when I dump my load, all the stuff that can be recycled. It's something so easy, I don't understand why people don't do it."

Gerardo said his first project will be to install solar power. But there's more to this story. The home used for the news conference uses zero-net energy, which means the utility bill for homeowner Tammy Schwolsky is basically nothing.

The home is also the Schwolsky's business, which also took a look at the homes of the contest winners.

"Primarily we're looking at things like air leakage," said Schwolsky. "The heating and cooling just escaping out of gaps and cracks. Sometimes two, three times what it should."

Energy leaks are typical in most homes, and it's a reason why one of the contest sponsors said Gerardo's plan to install solar is not the best first step.

"What we like to say in the industry is reduce before you produce," said Dan Thomsen. "We want to reduce their load before we start producing it up on their rooftop."

Related Content

STORY: [Energy rebates target Southland homeowners](#)

STORY: [LED light bulbs more energy-efficient](#)

So a better first step would be to seal the air leaks and install insulation. For example using a stack of old jeans is a great way to recycle while providing insulation to a home.

Los Angeles County Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky said an energy efficient home is a win-win situation for all of us.

"We can put more money in our own pockets," said Yaroslavsky. "Reduce the reliance on foreign oil and the implication that it has for our nation's national security interests. And we are cleaning the environment at the same time. You can't go wrong."

(Copyright ©2011 KABC-TV/DT. All Rights Reserved.)